

REMARKS

In the March 11, 2004 Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 14-26 were pending in the application; allowed claims 22-25, rejected claims 14, 18 and 20 under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112; rejected claims 14-16, 18, 20 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e); and rejected claims 14-21 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. § 103. In rejecting the claims, U.S. Patents 6,584,118 to Russell et al.; 5,706,285 to Saijonmaa et al.; 6,151,336 to Cheng et al. (References A, B and F, respectively, in the September 11, 2003 Office Action) and 5,606,317 to Cloonan et al. (Reference A in the March 11, 2004 Office Action) were cited. Claims 14-26 remain in the case. The Examiner's rejections are traversed below.

Newly Cited Prior Art: U.S. Patent 5,606,317 to Cloonan et al.

The Cloonan et al. patent is directed to an apparatus for mBnB coding and decoding with efficient bandwidth utilization. Specifically, Cloonan et al. discloses 8B/9B encoding at column 8, lines 30, et seq.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 First Paragraph

In item 2 on page 2 of the Office Action, claims 14, 18 and 20 were rejected under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 for allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement by reciting the negative limitation "without frame detection" (e.g., claim 14, line 4).

The Examiner's attention is directed to the statements in paragraphs [0002]-[0004], [0007] and [0014] et seq. of the Substitute Specification filed upon entering the national phase. As stated therein and as illustrated in Fig. 1, data is input at 1.25 Gbit/s to decoder DEC and a data control bit is added to each 8 bits output by the decoder. Although the Examiner may have found no statement that frame detection does not occur, there is no description of detecting frames in the specification. It is submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art would either be aware, or could easily ascertain the contents, of IEEE Draft P802.3z and Recommendation G.707 (a copy of which is submitted herewith as Exhibit A) mentioned in paragraphs [0002]-[0004] and that with such knowledge and the description of the invention, a person of ordinary skill in the art would understand that no frame detection would be performed by the system. Therefore, the limitations added to claims 14, 18 and 20 in the Amendment, filed by certificate of mail on December 11, 2003 and received by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office on December 15, 2004, were fully supported by the disclosure.

For the above reasons, withdrawal of the rejection under the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. § 112 is respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In item 5 on pages 3-5 of the Office Action, claims 14-16, 18, 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as anticipated by Russell et al. As discussed in the previous Amendment, the rate adaptation in Russell et al. is performed after frame detection has been performed. As discussed above, the limitation "without frame detection" (e.g., claim 14, line 4) in claims 14, 18 and 20 is supported by the application as understood by one of ordinary skill in the art. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 14, 18 and 20, as well as claims 15, 16 and 21 which depend therefrom, patentably distinguish over Russell et al.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

In item 7 on pages 5-8 of the Office Action, claims 14-16, 18, 20 and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Saijonmaa et al. in view of Russell et al. As discussed in the December 11, 2003 amendment, neither Saijonmaa et al. or Russell et al. discloses operating on Ethernet signals "without detecting frames" (claim 20, line 3). Therefore, it is submitted that claims 14-16, 18, 20 and 21 patentably distinguish over Saijonmaa et al. in view of Russell et al. for the reasons discussed above.

In item 8 on pages 9-10 of the Office Action, claims 17 and 26 were rejected over Russell et al. in view of Cloonan et al. Claims 17 and 26 recite that the signals recovered are "encoded 8B/9B signals" in accordance with the embodiment described on page 4 of the application. Nothing has been cited or found in either Russell et al. or Cloonan et al. teaching or suggesting modification of the system disclosed in Russell et al. to add the ability to recover encoded 8B/9B signals as disclosed in Cloonan et al. Thus, the citation of these two references merely provide a mosaic of teachings of the features recited in claims 17 and 26 without any reason for a person of ordinary skill in the art to combine the teachings to meet the limitations recited in the claims. Therefore, it is submitted that claims 17 and 26 patentably distinguish over Russell et al. in view of Cloonan et al.

In item 9 on pages 10-11, claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Russell et al. in view of Cheng et al. Nothing was cited or has been found in Cheng et al. overcoming the deficiencies of Russell et al. noted above. Since claim 19 depends from claim 18, it is submitted that claim 19 patentably distinguishes over Russell et al. in view of Cheng et al. for the reasons discussed above.

Summary

It is submitted that the references cited by the Examiner, taken individually or in combination, do not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 14-26 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

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By: Richard A. Gollhofer
Richard A. Gollhofer
Registration No. 31,106

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501